



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
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News Release

OMAHA ICE APPREHENDS 47 GANG MEMBERS, ASSOCIATES AS PART OF OPERATION COMMUNITY SHIELD

35 of those arrested have already been deported

OMAHA, Neb. — U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) special agents in Omaha have arrested more than 47 gang members and associates in eastern Nebraska and western Iowa since Operation Community Shield was launched in February. Of those arrested, 35 have been deported by ICE detention and removal officers.

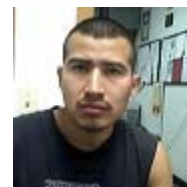
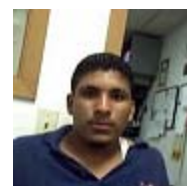
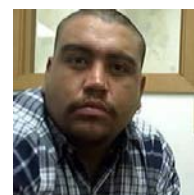
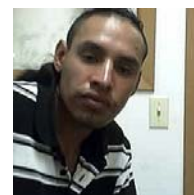
Operation Community Shield is an ongoing national ICE anti-gang initiative designed to disrupt, dismantle, and prosecute street gang members and their organizations. From the operation's beginning through the end of October, ICE has arrested more than 1,600 gang members and associates nationwide.

Those gang members and associates arrested by the ICE Omaha office include:

- Cecilio Rodriguez-Martinez, 35, a citizen of Mexico, is a leader of the 18th Street West Side gang in Omaha. He was convicted of being a felon in possession of a firearm in December 2003, sentenced to 21 months in prison, and was deported in October 2004. Rodriguez-Martinez illegally re-entered the United States and was arrested in April 2005 when Omaha Police officers and ICE special agents served a warrant on an Omaha residence. Rodriguez-Martinez was prosecuted and convicted of re-entry after deportation in September 2005 and sentenced to 88 months in prison. ICE will deport him upon his release.
- Victor Martinez-Solorez, 24, a citizen of Mexico, is a "Sureños 13" gang member. He was convicted of assault and battery in May 2003, and of disorderly conduct and obstructing justice in September 2005. Martinez-Solorez was deported Wednesday.



- Francisco Campos-Penaloza, 17, of Mexico, is a member of the Sureños 13 gang. He was convicted in September 2004 of first-degree assault and use of deadly weapon to commit a felony. Campos-Penaloza was deported Wednesday.
- Manuel Avalos-Banderas, 24, a citizen of Mexico, was arrested by Omaha police officers while spray-painting Sureños 13 graffiti. He was deported Wednesday.
- Raul Solorio-Ornelas, 20, Mexico, is a member of the Sureños 13 gang. He was caught by Omaha police officers spray-painting Sureño 13 graffiti. He was deported Wednesday.
- Omar Antonio Mejia, 23, a citizen of El Salvador, is an MS-13 gang member. He is believed to have been involved in a gang-related car chase with shots fired that occurred in early 2005. In May, ICE agents arrested him while he was in the company of three other MS-13 gang members. He was deported El Salvador Aug. 26.
- Marvin Beltran-Albines, 21, a citizen of Mexico, is a high-level member of the 18th Street West Side gang in Omaha. He was convicted of assault and battery, and was arrested by ICE agents subsequent to serving his sentence and deported to Mexico in August.
- Julio Cesar Pio-Hernandez, 23, a citizen of Mexico, is a member of the M S-13 (Mara Salvatrucha) gang in Omaha. He was convicted of domestic violence and carrying a concealed weapon. Shortly after his release from prison, Pio-Hernandez was arrested by ICE agents and was deported to Mexico in February.



The majority of those arrested were apprehended in the Omaha metropolitan area, and a few were arrested in Council Bluffs, Iowa. Among the crimes committed by other gang members and associates are: assault on a police officer, obstructing justice, gang-related shootings, sale of cocaine and methamphetamine, domestic violence, aggravated assault and making terroristic threats. Seven of those arrested are currently being criminally prosecuted for illegally re-entering the U.S. after being previously deported.

Those arrested are members and associates of the following gangs: MS-13, Sureños 13 (SUR-13), Lomas, Pelones 13, 18th Street West Side, Under Aged Krimals (UAK), Rebels, Diamond Street gang and Spanish Gangster Disciples.

“These arrests and deportations send a clear message to street gang members that stopping their criminal activity is a high priority with ICE,” said Resident Agent-in-Charge Michael Wardy of the Omaha ICE office. “We will continue to work closely with our law enforcement partners to break the cycles of gang-related violence that threaten the safety and stability of our communities.”

Under Operation Community Shield, ICE is employing its broad immigration authorities (both criminal and administrative immigration authorities) against foreign-born gang members. ICE is also employing its broad customs authorities to combat drug trafficking and other crimes committed by these gangs.

The MS-13 street gang was the initial target of Operation Community Shield. MS-13 is the largest and most violent street gang in the country. In May, ICE expanded Operation Community Shield to include all criminal street gangs with foreign-born members. With the launch of this second phase, ICE’s Operation Community Shield aims to ensure that gang members have no safe haven in our nation’s communities.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.